

and it is harder to make a profit. For these reasons, people in Nickel Belt or similar areas will not get the service which people in urban areas receive. They certainly will not get the service the people in rural Saskatchewan or rural Manitoba receive, where there are publicly-owned telephone networks. In the case of a publicly-owned network, the main priority is service to the people who own it, namely, the people of the province. That is not the motivation of Bell Telephone: that is why I am not interested in expediting passage of this bill. I do not care whether they get the bill this year or not. I do not care at all, because the only reason they want this bill is in order to maximize profits for their shareholders.

Mr. O'Connell: What about the jobs?

Mr. Nystrom: That is the response we always get from a Liberal or a Tory government. What about the jobs under INCO? The whole philosophy of the government is the "trickle down" theory. They believe that if you give enough to the big corporations, it will eventually trickle down to the small guy at the bottom. But what happens when a big corporation wants more money all of a sudden, or doesn't really give a damn about our country—like INCO—and goes to invest money in Guatemala or Indonesia and says, "To hell with the workers in Sudbury"?

An hon. Member: They have not said that.

Mr. Nystrom: They have. After getting all kinds of tax concessions and other benefits from the federal government, they make sure that a lot of the profits they made in this country are invested elsewhere. When we attack the large corporations, or when we delay the passage of a measure which will benefit a large corporation, we are criticized for not thinking about the number of jobs involved, or preventing ordinary people from getting something. Where are the government's priorities?

I was talking the other day about veterans' pensions. Tomorrow is Remembrance Day. Over the last four years or so, the government has intentionally short-changed veterans on disability pension by about \$40 million. But today we were discussing legislation which will give the corporations some \$1.2 billion, and at this moment there is before us a private member's bill to give the Bell Telephone company more dollars and a lot more opportunity to maximize its profits.

Mr. O'Connell: I am sure the hon. member does not wish to mislead the House intentionally. This bill does not give Bell Telephone anything in terms of money. It permits them a higher capital ceiling. Even to put a few more people on the telephone in the north requires the expenditure of capital, and more funds are needed.

● (1712)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ethier): Order, please. The hon. member for Yorkton-Melville (Mr. Nystrom) has the floor.

Mr. Nystrom: The apologist for Bell Telephone is filibustering again by bringing in another red herring. This bill seeks to

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minimize the regulations so as to make sure that Bell Canada does not have to come back before parliament as it has in the past. This is a way of providing Bell Canada, in the indirect sense, with more money, giving it an easier opportunity to maximize its profits.

I want to make the argument today for nationalizing Bell Canada, for having a publicly owned telephone system in this country. Any industry such as communications, transportation, or any of the resource industries, I think should be publicly owned so that they can provide a service to all the people, rather than maximizing profits for a few people, many of whom may be foreigners.

Many people in parliament, particularly in the Conservative party, may claim that public ownership is not very efficient. They say the public corporations cannot make a profit or operate efficiently. I would argue that in the case of telephones the publicly run corporations are run a hell of a lot more efficiently than Bell Canada. For the benefit of the Tory member who is laughing, I will give him some statistics. People in my constituency are paying a lot less for telephone service than people who live in the constituency of Nickel Belt. My constituents are getting a lot quicker service than those who live in Nickel Belt.

One of the shocks I had when I moved down to Ottawa after I was first elected in 1968 was the inefficiency of the telephone system here. One had to wait so long before getting service in Ontario and Quebec compared to the situation in the province of Saskatchewan. You wait a long time because the customer here is not important. The whole motivation of the capitalist system, or free enterprise system, is the maximization of profit. Bell Canada has a monopoly so it can screw the customer. It has no competition.

By contrast, in my province the priority is the customer, the client, which the company is there to serve. The company is not in existence to make a profit. It conducts its operation with a lot more business skill than does Bell Canada in the provinces of Ontario and Quebec.

Let me give the House some comparable statistics. In the city of Regina there is a publicly owned telephone system. Let me quote the statistics as at August, 1976. In the city of Regina there were 72,400 telephones. Private subscribers paid \$5 a month for service. Business telephones cost \$11.85 a month. In the city of Halifax where there were 96,249 telephones, private subscribers paid \$8.95 and business subscribers \$26.

I do not hear the one and only Conservative member in the House, or Liberal members interjecting with cat calls. I have given a real comparison between a publicly owned telephone system and a privately owned telephone system in cities of comparable size. We find that people in Regina get telephone service at almost half the cost of those in Halifax. The business community pays for its telephones less than half what it costs in Halifax. So we have a private enterprise corporation making it tough even for its business friends by charging more than twice what people in Saskatchewan pay.